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Lawrence University

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Lawrence University Ranked 60th Nationally in U.S. News' "America's Best Colleges" Guide

Posted on: September 1st, 2011 by Rick Peterson

Lawrence University was ranked 60th among 236 national liberal arts colleges and universities in *U.S. News & World Report's* 2012 "America's Best Colleges" report released today (9/13).

U.S. News' annual guide combines subjective information such as peer assessment with a statistical analysis of various factors it considers indicative of academic excellence — graduation rates, student retention and acceptance rates, among others — to determine its rankings.

Lawrence had strong showings in several of the categories used in the ranking methodology, including number of incoming students ranked in the top 10 percent of their high school class (43 percent), freshman retention rate (88 percent), graduation rate (73 percent), full-time faculty (93 percent), alumni giving rate (40 percent) and classes with less than 20 students (78%). Only 16 schools had a higher percentage of classes with an enrollment of 20 or less, a reflection of Lawrence's commitment to individualized learning and small classes.

Lists and rankings of a numerous other niche categories are included in the guide. Lawrence was ranked 24th nationally in a survey of guidance counselors from America's best high schools who were asked which liberal arts colleges they think offer the best education to their students.

"We are delighted that school counselors, who are uniquely positioned to help students find colleges that fit with their talents and aspirations, continue to think very highly of Lawrence," says Ken Anselment, dean of admissions and financial aid at Lawrence.

Williams College of Massachusetts earned the magazine's top spot in the national liberal arts college category for the eighth year in a row. Harvard and Princeton universities shared the top ranking in *U.S. News*' national universities category for the second time in three years after finishing no. 1 and no. 2, respectively, last year.

In compiling its annual "America's Best Colleges" guide, U.S. News & World Report evaluates nearly 1,500 of the nation's public and private four-year schools, using data from up to 16 separate factors, each of which is assigned a "weight" that reflects the magazine editor's judgment as to how much that measure matters. Each school's composite weighted score is then compared to peer institutions to determine final rankings.

Institutions are divided into several distinct categories. In addition to the best liberal arts college category that measures national institutions like Lawrence, other rankings are based on universities that grant master and doctorate degrees and colleges that are considered "regional" institutions.